

Paws to Dance



The Newsletter of the Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.

February 2021

The Judges Roundtable

By Shari Bryant

On December 20, 2020, the Sirius Guild and Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild hosted a Judges Roundtable on Zoom. Five questions were submitted for the judges to answer. One question was: Are there common errors you see on a regular basis in performances that you can share with us? Janet Dayton took the lead on answering this question. She commented all areas of the score sheet are interrelated to each other. So, if there are weaknesses in one section it will be reflected in other sections. The following were some common errors she has observed.

- Rushing your dog: Try to relax. Let your dog complete a movement before moving on to the next one.
- Overfacing your dog: Asking your dog to do a movement or skill your dog cannot do or does not want to do.
- Signals: Remember to give clear signals to your dog and follow through with the signal. If your dog does not respond to a signal, do not repeat it over and over. Go on to the next movement. When you keep giving a signal it detracts from your presentation because it becomes the focus.

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- Handler hijacks the performance: The intent of a presentation is to show your dog to his best advantage. When a handler moves to the beat of the music, or the music does not fit the dog, or the dog does not like the music, it does not show your dog to his best advantage. Just because the handler likes the music does not mean it is the right music. Remember the focus should be on your dog, or the team, not on the handler. Once you are out in the space, you need to find the balance in the relationship between you and your dog.

- **Choreography:** Choreography should be clear, crisp and clean. Kitchen sink choreography, where everything your dog knows is in the same presentation, makes it muddy. Just because you want to do something, doesn't mean you should. Remember you are working with straight lines and curved lines. Keep it simple. However, that does not mean it cannot be complex. Also, know your music. Know where the high and low points are in the music and where there are pauses. Incorporate those into your performance.
- **Opening and closing shapes:** After you have honored the judges, move to the opening shape and set up without a lot of fuss; do not reset or reposition your dog multiple times. Move out of the opening shape organically; meaning it is natural, flows and makes sense. It is not forced. Ask yourself: What is the most logical way to leave the opening shape? Where do we go from here? For the closing shape, the team should stop moving together, or the dog should move last, unless there is a point or purpose for the handler to make the last movement.
- **Imagination, Invention, Inspiration:** There needs to be more imagination, invention and inspiration. Straight lines and curved lines are used, but find new and creative ways to use straight lines and curved lines. It does not have to be complicated. Make movement interesting. For example, in one presentation, there was a dog and handler walking parallel lines about 6 feet apart. It was simple, but powerful and effective.
- **Transitions:** Transitions from phrase to phrase should be interesting and creative. Make sure the transitions in your choreography make sense. Do not do a movement then simply move from one spot to another spot to do another movement. One should flow into the next with purpose.
- **Movement:** There should be a purpose to movement. Movements should enhance or move the presentation forward. A lot of it is simply problem solving. For example, the dog is on the right, but needs to be on the left. How does the dog get there?
- **Starts and Stops:** Be aware of the starts and stops in your choreography. If the starts and stops or changes in direction are abrupt, it disrupts the dog's movement and creates disjointed choreography.
- **Build a movement vocabulary:** Put on music and move with your dog.
- **Errors:** Many errors happen before a performance. These include errors in attire, choreography, moving to the music, not using the music/choreography to make a point, and what is the purpose of a movement. There is no specific formula or way to become successful. Ask questions. Study. Be responsible for your own learning. Watch a lot of presentations. What resonates with you? Talk about it. Take care of everything in advance you have control over, then go with what you have.
- **What if:** Joan said this is a sport of "what if". Go out and explore.

Julia Gregory suggested a handler get ring time, maybe from other sports. It would help you to prepare for a trial and answer some questions such as when to arrive and how to warm up your dog.

Rickie Morrison commented, often we practice with minimal distractions. Then we go to a trial and our dogs are distracted by all of the new things at a trial. She suggested practicing often and with distractions. Also, if your

dog is heading to visit the judges or spectators, say something to your dog sooner rather than later. Teach your dog a signal that gets your dog to focus on you.

Betty Swenson reminded handlers to smile and to honor at the end of a presentation. Also, she has observed handlers ignoring the strong and weak areas of the space, or putting a dog's weak moves in a strong area.

Gaea Mitchel recommended training for the post-performance honor. Practice how to turn from your dog, honor, and then release your dog.

Leila Widgren suggested if your dog is known to visit judges, then avoid going towards the judges in your choreography. Set your dog up for success. Also, practice in a space that has the same set up as a titling event, and practice walking into the space to honor and set up in the opening shape.

If you are interested in seeing answers to the other questions, the recording for the Judges Roundtable is posted in the Members section of the CFF web site.

North Coast Canine Freestylers Guild

By Janet Dayton

We are planning a titling event for May 15 & 16, 2021. If things remain as they are, we should be able to have it. YAY! We are busy getting our routines ready and planning for the event. It feels good to be "moving forward with drive and energy." HA!



Our members continue to train and show in agility, nosework, obedience, flyball, and tracking this winter. Our dogs have kept us going and sane.

I just found out my Lark is the #1 Novice team and also the overall #1 Obedience team for 2020 from the Greyhound Club of America. What a nice surprise! She also qualifies for Versatility (Performance track) and Multitalented Awards with the GCA at Level 2. Who knew? She is such a good girlie and I am so proud of her.



Bridget's London with his agility ribbons.



Janet's Lark earned her Open Standard title in Agility.

Our NCCF member profile for this issue is Jim Keim.

What breed(s) have you had? Yorkshire Terrier, Siberian Husky, American Eskimo, Australian Shepherd (2), Border Collie (2), and Aussie/Border Collie mix, two were rescues.

How many dogs have you had in your life? 9

Any other pets? Had one cat, Lucky, a Siamese

How did you get involved with CFF? Found you on the internet.

Best moment with CFF? Just starting, that's in the future.

Do you have a goal you are working towards in CFF? Yes.

What do you hope people see when you work your dog in a CFF routine?

Artistry according to my vision.

Why do you have a dog in your life? I'll always have a dog in my life.

Several reasons, difficult to name just one so I will go with "a true loving partner". I'd be totally lost without one.

What behavior was hardest to train your dog to do? Focus when I need it.

Hobbies/Interests? Most dog sports, photography, and writing (I am a published author).

Job(s)?

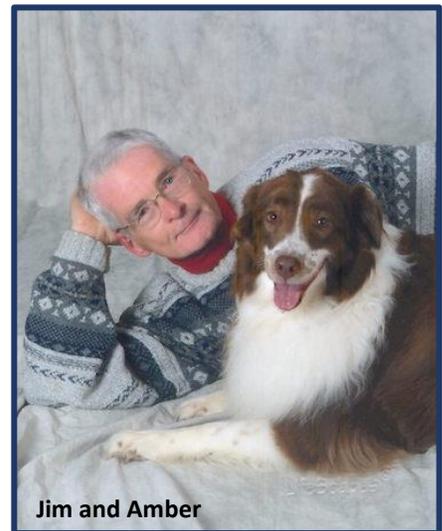
Favorite song(s)? Why? Usually, music like the theme to Dances with Wolves, something that flows, resonates in some way with the spirit. It can be fast or slow.

Favorite book(s)? Why? Bible, I study eschatology books by Johnathon Cahn

If you could go anywhere, where would you go? Some place with no zip code. Maybe Alaska.

Do you have a hero or special person you admire? My first wife, a true saint, wish I could be more like her. She died in 1994.

What makes you happy? In today's world, not much, but my dog Bizzy, maybe comfort food. What would make me happy is my girl space friend (a Veterinarian, does surgery mostly), would trash the COVID fear so we can pick up where we left off; we do text a lot.





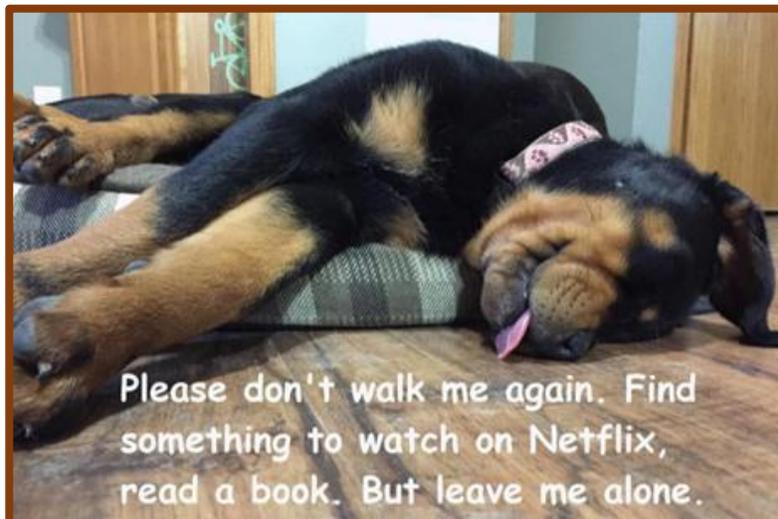
Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild

By Shari Bryant

We held another class via Zoom in January. We finished the Level I & II scoresheet. We plan to start reviewing the Level III & IV scoresheet. We hope to hold our next class in March. If you are interested in attending any of the future Zoom classes, please let Shari Bryant know (Lunar61@aol.com), and notification will be sent when a new Zoom class is scheduled. If you missed one or more of the previous classes, you can find the recordings in the Members section of the CFF website.

I would like to thank several of our Guild members for their contribution to the Zoom classes. Gaea Mitchel has spent a lot of time reviewing videos and selecting ones that best represent the different sections of the scoresheet that we review. Barbara Long has been our moderator and does a great job of guiding the discussion for each video. Adele Monroe has monitored the chat box and sends me a text if she sees or hears of any technical issues. This is really helpful when I play the video. Sometimes there is no sound coming through to the participants. It is usually because I have forgotten to unplug my earphones. So, I now have a big note to remind myself to unplug my earphones, but sometimes I still forget. Also, I want to thank all the participants because without you there would not be much of a discussion. I have learned a lot through these Zoom classes and am looking forward to doing the Level III & IV scoresheets.

Finally, we are planning to host a titling event with Sirius Guild on November 6 & 7 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Fingers crossed the pandemic will subside and restrictions lifted so we can enjoy getting together again.



Mark Your Calendars – Upcoming Events

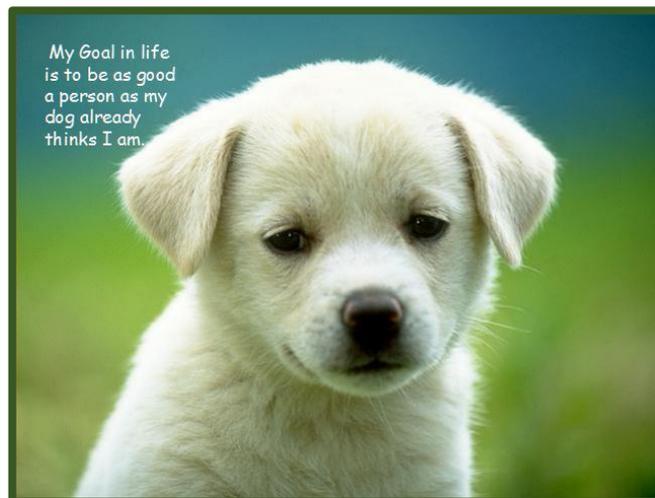
- May 15 & 16, 2021 **North Coast Canine Freestylers Titling Event** - Chesterland, Ohio
More information coming soon.
- November 6 & 7, 2021 **Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild & Sirius Guild Titling Event** – Winston-Salem, North Carolina
More information later this year.
- March 18-20, 2022 **DogWork® Jamboree** – Winston-Salem, North Carolina
The Jamboree has been rescheduled. More information later this year.
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Membership Reminder

The expiration date for Annual Members was extended to March 31 this year. Please be sure to renew soon. If you have an online account with access to the Members Only Area the website application will lock you out effective at midnight of that date unless you have renewed. Subscriptions to the Learning Center will expire at the same time for members and certified CFF Instructors as well. The fastest way to renew is via your online account. If you don't have an online account and need help signing on, Brenda Jameson can help you out. Contact her at webmaster@canine-freestyle.org.

Many small organizations are struggling to stay afloat in these times, and your support as members helps CFF greatly. Its been a difficult year for all of us, but we look forward to seeing you again soon at the next CFF competition or event. Please stay healthy and play with your dogs!

Brenda Jameson
Past President



Proposed By-Laws Changes and Ballot

The Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc. Board proposes the following changes to the By-Laws (proposed changes are in bold and underlined).

Article I, Section 2, Dues: Membership dues shall be set by the Board and not exceed \$50 per year, payable on or before the 1st day of ~~January~~ **April** of each year. No member may vote whose dues are not paid for the current year. During the month of ~~November~~ **February** CFF shall send to each member a statement of dues for the ensuing year.

Article I, Termination of Membership; Section 4(a), by resignation: any member in good standing may resign from the CFF upon written notice to the Secretary; but no member may resign when in debt to the CFF. Dues obligations are considered a debt to the CFF and they become incurred on the first day of each ~~fiscal~~ **membership** year.

Article I, Termination of Membership; Section 4(b), by lapsing: A membership will be considered as lapsed and automatically terminated if such members dues remain unpaid 30 days after the first day of the ~~fiscal~~ **membership** year; however, the Board may grant a additional 60 days of grace to such delinquent members in meritorious cases. In no case may a person be entitled to vote at any CFF meeting whose dues are unpaid as of the date of that meeting.

Article VII, Amendments, Section 2: The Constitution and By-Laws may be amended at any time provided a copy of the proposed amendment has been mailed (**postal or electronic**) by the Recording Secretary to each member, accompanied by a ballot for the proposed amendment. The accompanying notice shall specify a date not less than 30 days after the date of the mailing, by which date the ballots must be returned to the Recording Secretary to be counted. A favorable vote of 2/3 of the members in good standing whose ballots are returned within the time limit shall be required to effect any such amendment.

Please mark the ballot below indicating whether you support or do not support the proposed changes to the By-Laws. Return your completed ballot to Shari Bryant, Recording Secretary, by April 1, 2021. The ballot may be submitted via e-mail to Shari Bryant at Lunar61@aol.com or may be mailed to:

Shari Bryant
627 Morgan Summers Road
Gibsonville, NC 27249

BALLOT

Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.

2021 Proposed By-Laws Changes to: Section I, Article 2; Section I, Article 4(a) & 4(b); Article VII, Section 2

_____ Yes. I support the proposed By-Laws changes.

_____ No. I do not support the proposed By-Laws changes.

Paws to Dance
c/o Shari Bryant
627 Morgan Summers Road
Gibsonville, NC 27249

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Upcoming Events

North Coast Canine Freestylers Guild Titling Event, Chesterland, OH, May 15-16, 2021
Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild & Sirius Guild Titling Event, Winston-Salem, NC, November 6-7, 2021
DogWork® Jamboree, Winston-Salem, NC, March 18-20, 2022

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